



STATE OF WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE  
BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

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TESTIMONY PRESENTED on **SENATE BILL 288**  
December 7, 2011

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INTRODUCTION

Good morning Senator Kedzie and members of the Committee. My name is Jeanne Cargill. I've served in the Department of Natural Resources' Clean Water Fund Program for 19 years. Senate Bill 288 removes some of the existing statutory language from the portion of the statutes that governs the Clean Water Fund Program.

In 1996, the Federal Government appropriated \$50 million for a federal Hardship Grant Program for Rural Communities. Because Wisconsin already had a Clean Water Fund Financial Hardship Assistance Program, and because the federal criteria made it difficult to locate municipalities in Wisconsin that could meet the hardship criteria, we determined the best way to make sure we could utilize the federal grant money was to incorporate the federal program into our own hardship program.

In 1998, the Wisconsin legislature passed a bill that included new statutory language to allow the Clean Water Fund Program to accept and utilize a one-time grant of \$1,355,800 from the federal government to provide federal assistance to a community facing financial hardship. The U.S. EPA published guidelines in March 1999 for administering this federal grant program through the Clean Water State Revolving Funds.

Wisconsin received its federal grant in May 1999. After much effort, we located a Wisconsin municipality that met the federal hardship assistance criteria, and in 2002 provided Fulton Sanitary District No. 2 a grant of \$1,458,668 and a 0% interest loan of \$210,643 for their wastewater treatment project.

The Fulton project utilized the entire \$1,355,800 federal hardship grant. There is no indication from the federal government that there will ever again be an appropriation of funds for the federal Hardship Grant Program for Rural Communities.

This bill removes all references to and provisions for the federal Hardship Grant Program for Rural Communities from the Wisconsin Statutes. By passing SB 288, the Wisconsin legislature would clean up the Clean Water Fund Program statutes and provide clarity in the hardship assistance section of the statutes making the language much easier for the Program's customers to read and understand.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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